

A serious gap exists in our military suicide prevention efforts - a gap that needlessly cost the life of one young Central New Jersey resident in September 2008. Sergeant Coleman Bean of East Brunswick, New Jersey did two combat tours in Iraq. In between and after those tours, he sought treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. Because Sgt. Bean was a member of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) – a pool of Reserve soldiers not assigned to any unit but available for mobilization if needed - he could not get treatment for his condition because the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs refused to take responsibility for Sgt. Bean and the thousands like him.

His father, Greg, poignantly has written, “He fell through the cracks. He had no advocate, no Army machinery to help him find his way through the system. He felt he was literally on his own. He made appointments with the VA to have an ulcer treated and to obtain treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. Those appointments were postponed. He was still waiting when he took his own life.”

Two federal agencies charged with helping prevent suicides among our returning troops utterly failed Sgt. Bean and his family. In order to help prevent another such tragedy, I have introduced [legislation](#) – named in memory of Sgt. Bean – to require that at least once a quarter, someone is checking on IRR soldiers and other reservists not assigned to a Guard or Reserve unit to make sure they are alright, and if they are not, to get them the help they need. I appreciate the tireless work of Coleman’s parents, including Linda who told me that “one phone call – just one honest expression of compassion – can help catch and hold someone who is at the edge of despair. For us, if the phone calls mandated by this legislation help save one life – then that is blessing enough.”

Saving on Home Energy Costs

Last week, I visited the home of an East Brunswick resident, who - according to her contractor - will save at least 40 percent on her energy bills after replacing her appliances, completing air sealing, and replacing insulation. To make these energy efficiency improvements, she and other homeowners are eligible for [federal tax credits](#), including those created under the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#).

Making home energy efficiency improvements isn’t just about cost savings. It’s also about job creation. Homes don’t weatherize and retrofit themselves. A home owner has to hire someone to install the windows, redo the insulation, and make other improvements - and they in turn will hire people to help them do the work.

Unfortunately, many New Jerseyans who want to improve their homes cannot afford to wait until tax season to receive a rebate. The upfront costs, despite the long term savings, are often prohibitive. This is why I have cosponsored the [Home Star Energy Retrofit Act of 2010](#) , which the House is expected to consider next week. Home Star is a simple concept that provides incentives to overcome the barrier of upfront costs – and help families make an investment that will ultimately pay for itself. The bill would provide up to \$3,000 in rebates for energy efficiency improvements based on energy retrofits.

Disaster Assistance on Your Smartphone

Smart phone users can now access a new mobile website set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to access disaster preparedness information. The site, m.fema.gov , provides answers to frequently asked questions, including what to do in a disaster, where you can find assistance, and how you can help others.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT

Member of Congress